MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

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FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 2 2015/2016

LRV0025
READING AND VOCABULARY: SKILLS AND STRATEGIES 2

(All Sections / Groups)

7 MARCH 2016
2.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.
(2 hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENT

1. This question paper consists of 7 printed pages with 2 sections only.
2. Answer **ALL** questions in Section A and Section B.
3. Please write **ALL** your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.

SECTION A: READING COMPREHENSION [45 MARKS]

Question 1 (30 marks)

Instructions: Read the passage carefully and answer ALL questions that follow.

Oil Slick: How BP Is Handling Its P.R. Disaster

1 BP faces two crises. The first is stopping the spillage of 200,000 gallons of oil a day in the Gulf of Mexico. The other is convincing people it's trying to stop the spillage of 200,000 gallons of oil a day in the Gulf of Mexico. BP has long been famous for its public relations both in good ways and bad. Its "Beyond Petroleum" rebranding campaign, first launched in 2000, has earned plaudits from the PR community. It also drew mockery from journalists and environmentalists who saw the campaign as "greenwashing." Now, in the midst of the biggest disaster of its disaster-laden history, BP is experimenting with new ways to get its message out. Its traditional efforts with official statements, press releases, morning-show interviews have been *hit or miss*, according to crisis communications experts. But it appears to be having more success with social media.

2 Since the initial explosion on the oil rig in April, BP has made some missteps. For example, the company initially told reporters that the rig was leaking 1,000 barrels of oil a day. The real figure turned out to be 5,000 barrels, after a new leak was discovered. Even then a BP spokesman downplayed the number as somewhere between 1,000 and 5,000. "***That*** hurt their credibility early on," says Timothy Coombs, who teaches public relations at Eastern Illinois University. "People wondered, *How much can we trust you?*" It also violated a rule that Larry Smith of the Institute for Crisis Management tells his clients: "Don't speculate. If you know, say so. If you don't know, say you don't know."

3 BP should have not tried to deflect blame for the accident. Its first press release after the spill emphasized that the oil rig belonged to drilling contractor Transocean Ltd. and that BP offered its "full support," implying that it wasn't at fault. The company also referred to the accident as the "Gulf of Mexico oil spill," whereas others including President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency called it the "BP oil spill." BP then tried to distinguish between blame for the accident and responsibility for cleaning up after it. "It wasn't our accident," CEO Tony Hayward said on the *Today* show, "but we are absolutely responsible for the oil, for cleaning it up."

4 That may be literally true: BP owns the oil but not the rig. But it's a shoddy communications strategy, says Smith. Wherever the fault lies, BP shouldn't be *splitting hairs.* Companies should take the fall and work out recriminations behind closed doors, says Coombs. For example, when the chain Taco Johns had an E. coli outbreak, it did not publicly blame the lettuce supplier. It took responsibility. And, of course, sued the lettuce supplier later.

5 BP also needs to grasp that though it may not be a villain, people perceive it that way. Hayward initially said that BP "will honor all legitimate claims for business interruption." A reporter asked what an illegitimate claim would look like. "I could give you lots of examples," he said. "This is America—come on. We're going to have lots of illegitimate claims. We all know that." Michael W. Robinson of Levick Strategic Communications recommends a bit more self- awareness. "You

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have to recognize that everyone, from fishermen to congressmen, is going to look at you with a jaundiced view," Robinson says.

6 When it comes to social media and the Web, though, communications' experts give BP high marks. BP created a section of its Web site dedicated to the spill, complete with photos, video, and maps that track the cleanup. "I'd have to give it an A+," says Smith. In one video, a sweaty, fatigued Hayward explains the cleanup while a roomful of busy-looking employees buzzes behind him, giving viewers a glimpse into the hectic cleanup process that they don't get from an interview with Katie Couric. Same with Deepwaterhorizonresponse.com, a new Web site created by the coalition of organizations pitching in to clean up the mess, including BP. The company also posts constant updates to its Twitter feed.

7 Putting your propaganda on Twitter and Facebook does not make it any less propagandistic. But *it* does help a company respond faster and more precisely to new developments. When reports came out that BP was trying to get fishermen to sign waivers holding BP harmless from certain claims related to the cleanup, BP backpedaled on Twitter: "We have assured fishermen's association that fishermen offering services are not required to sign a waiver. Any signed will not be enforced." Twitter also helps build trust in small ways. For example, BP tweeted a hotline for people to call if they see oiled wildlife.

8 BP is not the first company to handle a crisis via new media. When two employees of Domino's Pizza posted a video that showed one of them sticking food up his nose, the company's president posted his apology on YouTube. Nestle, meanwhile, showed what not to do by snarkily responding to critics on its Facebook page. But BP appears to be embracing the more-is-better ethos of new media more than any other troubled company. "The old saying is true: You can never over-communicate in a crisis," says Robinson. By that measure, BP is doing just fine.

(Adapted from: *Oil Slick. How BP is handling its PR disaster. Retrieved 5 May 2010 from http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2010/05/oil_slick.html*)

Question I (5 marks)

Instructions: Find a word in the passage for each of the meanings below.

a. an enthusiastic approval or round of applause (Paragraph 1)

b. the quality of being trusted and believed in (Paragraph 2)

c. exhibiting hostility or resentment (Paragraph 5)

d. to retract or modify a previous statement or opinion (Paragraph 7)

e. the distinguishing character or guiding beliefs of an organisation or group (Paragraph 8)

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Question II (2 marks)
Instructions: Provide the references for the following pronouns in the passage.

a. *That* (line 17)
b. *it* (line 57)

Question III (2 marks)
Instructions: Explain the following phrases that best expresses its meaning in context.

1." . . . hit or miss…" (line 10)

2. " . . .splitting hairs …" (line 34)

Question IV (5 marks)
Instructions: Complete the sentences by using the correct form of the word in parentheses, which is taken from the passage. Use AFFIXES to form the correct form of the word. The first one has been done for you.

Example: (0) The team's **disastrous** performance in the game has raised serious questions about the abilities of the coach. **(DISASTER)**

a. The person who caused the _____ could have done so with the purest motives in having the public welfare in mind. (LEAK)

b. Any guesses as to who will take over the post of chairman are mere _____ and shouldn't be taken seriously. (SPECULATE)

c. A sign in a parking garage that says it is not responsible for any damage is an example of a _____ responsibility. (CLAIM)

d. He was dismissed from his job because he had _____classified information. (HANDLE)

e. Some of the media buzzwords are awkwardly constructed and so _____ that they cannot be understood. (PRECISE)

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Question V (6 marks)
Instructions: Based on the statements given below, write **T** if the statement is true and **F** if the statement is false.

a. The oil spill in the Mexican Gulf is the only and biggest disaster BP has ever experienced.

b. BP did not intentionally hold back information about the size of the oil slick.

c. BP had been unable to control its public message as it had with the spill itself.

d. BP promoted green based environment but operated it in a way that was damaging to the environment.

e. BP was able to stem the blow of the oil spill because the rig belonged to another company.

f. The communication strategy was not handled well because BP had ruined the extent of its responsibility and risked aggravating the already sceptical public.

Question VI (10 marks)
Instructions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

a. State TWO factors for BP's bumbling public relations. (2 marks)

b. Why does Smith describe BP's communication strategy on the spillage as shoddy? (2 marks)

c. What tone did Hayward use when he said, "This is America—come on. We're going to have lots of illegitimate claims. We all know that." Give a reason to support your answer. (2 marks)

d. In what ways did the use of social media appear to be more successful for BP during the crisis? (2 marks)

e. What is the writer referring to when he says that BP is embracing the "more-is-better ethos" of new media compared to the other troubled companies? (2 marks)

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Question 2 (15 marks)

Create a suitable diagram that shows the stages of manufacturing and process adjustment of the consumer goods.

There are few stages involved in manufacturing and also the process in the adjustment of the consumer goods. Goods manufacturing is a complex process and it is done in several stages. Moreover, the adjustments are done based on the feedback given to the earlier stages of the process. Raw materials and other components are stored together and production planning is done.

There are two major processes involve in the overall manufacturing process. Firstly, is the manufacturing process itself and secondly is the information feedback process with which the adjustment of the manufacturing is done. After the product research, the design part is done and this input is used in product planning stage. After the production planning is completed, the assembly, inspection, testing and packaging stages are done sequentially. Feedback from testing phase is used in design stage and which led back to product planning stage. Moreover, the market research affects the design and advertising stages where the inputs from the market research stage is used in packaging stage. The final two stages are dispatch and sales. The information flow stages gives feedback to other stages to refine and adjust the process.

In summary, the consumer goods manufacturing process involves both the multi-staged manufacturing and research methods. The manufacturing stages involve from storage, assembly, inspection, packing, and even to the sales methods whereas the research stages include market and product research, design and advertisement.

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SECTION B: SUMMARY [15 MARKS]

Instructions: Read the following text carefully. Based on the information, write a summary of about **120 words** on ***the challenges of social media faced by corporate communicators during a crisis.***

Social media are fundamentally changing the way people inform themselves, interact, and engage in issues they deem relevant. At virtually no cost, consumers can gather likeminded people around the world to rally for or against a case. NGOs collect thousands of views of a campaign video, sometimes without the targeted organization even knowing about it. While in the past, a couple of calls from journalists would have rang an alarm bell, today a storm may build up in the depths of the internet without the victim really noticing it. No wonder that corporate communicators do regard social media as a major threat in crisis situations. Yet few companies have procedures in place to properly handle them, as a survey carried out in August 2010 by Gartner Communications demonstrated. So it might be time to put some basics in place.

Dramatically enhanced speed may be the most obvious impact of social media on crisis handling. Everything moves much faster than just some years ago like the evolution of campaigns, the international expansion of a story, the activation of support groups and stakeholders. Response times, once determined by publishing deadlines of daily newspapers, have shrunk to hours or minutes in dealing with postings and tweets. This requires new strategies and processes. For example, even if a corporate communications team does not proactively use social media, it should at least understand how the most important platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and most recently Google+ function and understand their netiquettes. Also, as in any traditional crisis preparation, identifying relevant influencers upfront is crucial, if it is just through free tools like Klout.com or blogpulse.com.

Along with higher speed, things get more complex. Gone are the days when monitoring your handful of national papers and major TV channels got you an approximately accurate picture of the public debate. Today there is a potentially infinite number of sources that may be relevant or become relevant at some point during the crisis – established ones like Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and influential bloggers, but also Wikis or campaign platforms created especially for the case at hand. It requires a forward-looking radar system rather than a retrospective classical monitoring to detect negative discussions at an early stage, when the organization still has a chance to engage and be listened to. Tools like google alerts, digg.com, reddit.com or Technorati.com provide free search and alert options on specific topics. Netvibes.com serves as an aggregator of different sources.

To make things worse, in this hectic and complex environment, it has become impossible to hide anything. In Germany, several high-ranking politicians were found guilty of having based their PhD grade thesis largely on plagiarism. The evidence did not come from scientific institutions, but from crowds gathering on a wiki, screening the papers sentence by sentence and, ultimately, forcing the universities to withdraw the grade. We have seen companies struggle following undercover placement of comments in online outlets – funnily, often companies engaged in internet-prone businesses. The CEO of We-Tab producer Neofonie got caught by a blogger in posting fake customer reviews of their own product; more recently, Facebook had to admit having hired Burson-Marsteller to place negative headlines about Google. These guys, at least, should have known better that in the web, transparency is the name of the game. If you have got something to hide, it will be discovered. So beware or, even better, act accordingly.

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Social media, not least, enable direct interaction with individual stakeholders one by one. There are plenty of examples where smart, adequate responses by brands to a consumer complaint on Facebook or Twitter turned critics into advocates. This new element seems to be disturbing to some long-served communicators longing for the old days when it was enough to know your handful of trusted journalists. Yet it might be the most powerful option for corporations to drive a pro-active agenda even under crisis circumstances. Instead of an editorial filter, there is an opportunity to deliver one's own message directly to individuals, react to specific questions and concerns and hit the right tone for different types of conversations.

While social media provide a whole new set of challenges and opportunities, it should also be said that fundamentals of crisis communication management do not change, especially when it comes to preparedness and strategy. You will still need to do your crisis mapping. It will still be your three-step response of showing empathy, dealing with the concrete impact of the crisis, and being transparent about it. And, of course, traditional mass media will continue to play a critical role in shaping public opinion. In fact, one could argue that, despite all the web whisper, a problem turns into a crisis once traditional mass media pick it up then of course turning a lot of attention to the social media clutter as well.

(Adapted from: *Crisis Communication in the Era of Social Media. Retrieved 5 September 2011 from* ***http://www.ipra.org/itl/09/2011/crisis-communication-in-the-era-of-social-media***)

End of Paper